

outreach to Members, so that they are able to perform their tasks to their utmost ability. She reached out to the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) and to his staff to make sure that the committee funding for the House of Representatives did not get caught up in the same partisan bickering that previous Congresses had.

Without question, her leadership and decision to put politics aside has made my job much easier. I commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) and the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) for working in conjunction to aid and abet the cause of this great institution of ours.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of our colleagues will agree that the proposed 9.4 percent increase in committee funding from the 107th Congress level is fiscally responsible and in fact quite thrifty, especially when three factors are considered: the committee workload, the committee staff compensation, and the mission-critical technological upgrades that the chairman so adequately addressed in his remarks.

Let me say as a person who is enjoying the experience of serving on this committee for the first time, we had the chairmen come before us and enunciate their specific concerns about the workload that they now possess, their desire to reach out beyond the Beltway, their specific concern as it relates to events that have transpired since September 11, and the new kind of pressure that so many of our committees find themselves under with expanding jurisdictions and issues that heretofore were not part of the day-to-day business of this institution. The Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and the Committee on International Relations all were particularly impacted in this past legislative session, so I am pleased that we were able to provide adequate funding for those specific committees.

Congress will confront many issues, including the heightened policing needed for the Nation's accounting, financial and pension systems, which will impose new demands on the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce, as well the investigation of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* tragedy, all important issues that fall squarely on the shoulders of our various committees impacted by this decision.

As to the committee staff itself, again I want to thank the various Chairs who came before our committee, to a person all concerned that there be equity. Since COLAs are already in place for the United States Senate and the executive branch, it is increasingly important that staffers who work for our House committees get the same kind of just reward and equity they richly deserve. They carry out the great work of our various committees here. The work this institution's committee staffs conduct on be-

half of the American people is no less important than the work conducted by their peers in the Senate and the executive branch, and their monthly paychecks must reflect that.

Again, I thank the chairmen of the various committees who came forward and made that one of their top concerns as well.

As the chairman has pointed out, mission-critical technology upgrades equally are important as we continue to reach out to our constituents to make sure that they receive the most up-to-date data in a timely fashion. This can be a costly, but essential, activity; and we expect that a separate vehicle will be used to meet some of the essential institutional needs, but many technological needs cannot wait for later action. Again, I appreciate the great efforts that were put forward in the committee.

Most of all, I would like to focus on the great equity that this chairman has brought to the committee. I am a new ranking member to this committee, but I am well aware of its past history. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) reminded me in subcommittee that it was not always the practice of the Democratic majority to provide the same kind of equity that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) has pursued and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) along with him in the previous session, and I am proud to join in this session. Repeatedly and with the support of the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), and the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT), the issue of two-thirds/one-third funding has been uppermost in my concern and those of the Members of the minority, and also the way that those dollars are handled equitably within the committee process.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) has continually stepped forward, not only in words, but in deeds, to insist upon that kind of equity within our committees, and I thank him for that. It has been especially important to our Committee on Small Business. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) has made this issue important, and I thank the chairman for stepping forward and aiding and abetting her cause and the concerns of that committee.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by saying that I do think that it is important that when you are working in a bipartisan nature like this that you have an esprit de corps.

I want to thank my members of the minority on our committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), who have submitted remarks for the RECORD. Both bring great value to this committee process, and especially in carrying out the mission of our leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my support for House Resolution 148, which pro-

vides for an overall average 9.4 percent increase in funding for the 19 committees under the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration from the level set in the 107th Congress.

The process through which this resolution was developed, and the Majority's commitment to ensuring equitable treatment for the Minority, indicate a healthy respect for the work of this institution and the vital contributions that both sides of the aisle make in enacting and overseeing public policy. The Committee Chairman, Rep. BOB NEY, and his staff must be commended for their commitment to comity and bipartisanship.

I also want to express my gratitude to my Leader, NANCY PELOSI, and her staff. Her leadership was critical to the progress toward fairness in the allocation of committee resources between the Majority and Minority which this resolution represents. As any outstanding leader would, Leader PELOSI early on chose to focus on the legitimate institutional needs of the House committee system. She reached out to Speaker HASTERT and his staff to make sure that the committee funding work of House Administration did not get caught up in the same partisan bickering that had plagued committee funding in previous Congresses. Without question, her leadership and decision to put politics aside made my job much, much easier. I commend Leader PELOSI and Speaker HASTERT.

I think my colleagues will agree that the proposed 9.4 percent increase in committee funding from the 107th Congress level is a fiscally responsible and in fact quite thrifty, especially when three key factors are considered: Factor #1: Increased committee workload: September 11, 2001 cast into sharp focus the need for the U.S. House of Representatives to examine the gaps and deficiencies in this nation's military and security apparatus. While I expect the new House Select Committee on Homeland Security to lead the charge in this area in the 108th Congress, virtually no House committee has been spared responsibilities because the issue of security extends to the jurisdiction of virtually every House committee. In addition, the recent military action in Iraq, combined with the immense diplomatic and reconstruction challenges associated with its successful resolution, will impose new oversight and legislative demands on several House committees, particularly the Committees on Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations.

Other significant committee duties that were never contemplated at the beginning of the 107th Congress but will confront the committee system in 108th Congress include heightened policing of the nation's accounting, financial, and pension systems, which will impose new demands on the Committees on Ways & Means, Financial Services, Education & the Workforce, and Energy & Commerce, and investigating the Space Shuttle *Columbia* tragedy, a critical mission that will fall largely to the Science Committee.

Factor #2 Committee staff compensation/cost-of-living adjustments. I was greatly encouraged that virtually all the committee chairs sought cost-of-living adjustments for their committee staff personnel on par with COLAs already in place in the U.S. Senate, the Executive Branch, House MRA's and House support offices like the Chief Administrative Office. If House committees are to attract and retain the